

Personal Bible Study

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The Training Center

The Training Center is a ministry of Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas. The Training Center is the tangible expression of one of the three guiding metaphors that best describes the vision and mission of Fellowship; namely, that Fellowship is a “greenhouse,” a “training center,” and a “launching pad.” The necessary link between the greenhouse and launching pad is the Training Center where people are prepared and equipped for leadership in life and ministry.

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Core Training is a training track of ten training experiences for everyone at Fellowship. These ten trainings are meant to provide a starting point for engaging life at Fellowship and growing into a prepared and equipped spiritual leader. Whether you are new to Fellowship or have been around for decades, The Training Center is the place to start growing and developing.

BIBLE AND THEOLOGY

Panorama of the Bible

We Believe or Our Faith

Personal Bible Study

MISSION AND MINISTRY

Perspectives/GO Primer (coming 2019)

Leadership Lab

Great Commission: Evangelism & Discipleship (coming 2020)

LIFE AND GROWTH

Align Your Finances with the Heart of God

Re I Frame Family: Marriage and Parenting

Great Commandment: Worship, Prayer, and Spiritual Growth (coming 2021)

DISCOVER

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Preface

“BE DILIGENT (STUDY) to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing (handling) the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV) How one approaches, reads and studies the Bible determines the benefit one receives from it. It has been said that we must all handle the Scriptures carefully and that in doing so, one is either a surgeon who rightly divides the Word of Truth or a butcher who hacks away at it.

This six-week course of study is designed for future surgeons, men and women who approach the Scriptures reverently and wisely. It is designed to expose the serious, emerging student of the Word to good principles and practices in Bible reading, observation, interpretation, and application.

This is a beginning study, not a final destination. Together, let's explore the book and begin to rightly divide it's life-giving message.

—Robert V. Cupp
BiLD Training Center
Spring, 2012
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PSALM 119:18

Open my eyes Lord, that I may
see wonderful things in your Word.

“It is only when truth is discovered that it is appropriated.
When a man is simply told the truth, it remains external
to him and he can quite easily forget it. When he is led to
discover the truth himself, it becomes an integral part of
him and he never forgets.”

—WILLIAM BARCLAY

Session One

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE VALUE OF THE WORD OF GOD

From Psalm 119

Seven Key Benefits

1. Psalm 119:9-11 NASB

*How can a young man **keep his way pure?** By keeping it according to Your word. ¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. ¹¹Your word I have treasured in my heart, **That I may not sin** against You."*

Benefit: _____

2. Psalm 119:25 NASB

*My soul cleaves to the dust; **Revive me** according to Your word.*

Benefit: _____

The grass withers,
the flower fades,
but the word of our
God stands forever.

—ISAIAH 40:8

Every word of God
is tested; He is a
shield to those who
take refuge in Him.

—PROVERBS 30:5

Reading the Bible

There is no substitute for personally reading the Scripture. Hearing the Word is beneficial, but reading the text for yourself, looking at the words, seeing the passage, observing the structure, feeling the narrative, this is so foundational to a life-long practice of absorbing the truth of God's Word.

Sermons will assist you in your growth. Biblical teaching will explain the meaning of the text. But the non-negotiable building block of grasping the Scripture begins with personal, consistent, purposeful reading of the Word of God.

Read the Scriptures; over and over again, read the Scriptures. Make it a spiritual discipline that defines who you are.

—ROBERT V. CUPP

Psalm 119:114 MSG

You're my place of quiet retreat;
I wait for your Word to renew me.

3. **Psalm 119:89, 160** NASB

Forever, O LORD, Your word is **settled** (it stands firm) in heaven... The sum of Your word is **truth**, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is **everlasting**.

Benefit: _____

4. **Psalm 119:24, 37** NASB

Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my **counselors**...
Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity (i.e. worthless things).
And revive me in Your ways.

Benefit: _____

5. **Psalm 119:105** NASB

Your word is a **lamp** to my feet
And a **light** to my path.

Benefit: _____

But his delight is in the law of the LORD. And in His law He meditates day and night.

—PSALM 1:2

This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

—JOSHUA 1:8

Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

³ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.

⁴ Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

⁵ which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

¹¹ By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

6. **Psalm 119:174-175** NIV

*I long for your **salvation**, LORD, and your law gives me delight.*

¹⁷⁵*Let me live that I may praise you, and may your laws **sustain** me.*

Benefit: _____

7. **Psalm 119:65** NIV

***Do good** to your servant **according to** your word, LORD.*

Benefit: _____

Seneca (1st cent. A.D. Roman statesman and philosopher) believed that if we are our own authority we enslave ourselves to ourselves, which is the worst bondage of all.

John 8:32

Jesus said, "...and you shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Anthanasius wrote, "For indeed the holy and God-breathed Scriptures are self-sufficient for the preaching of truth."

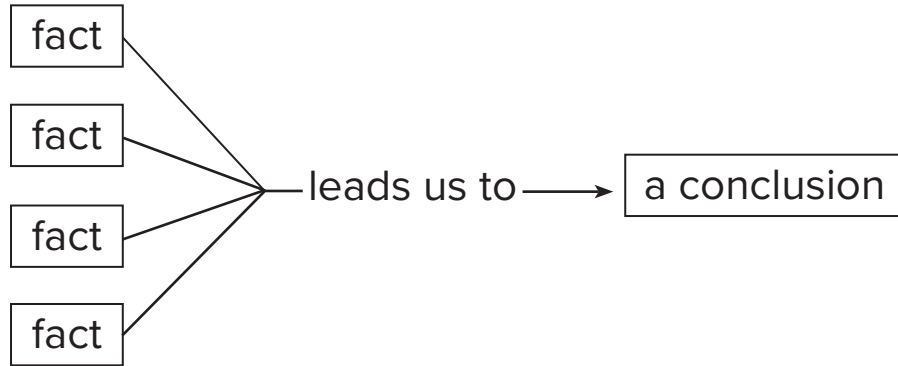
"It is the spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

—JESUS /JOHN 6:63

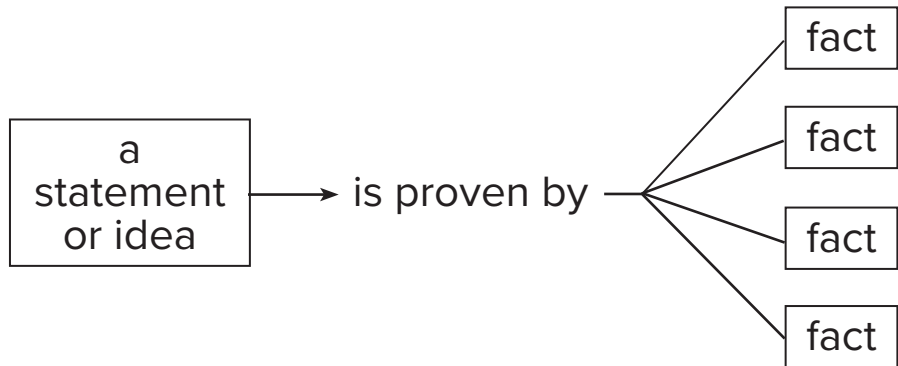
For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

—HEBREWS 4:12

Induction



Deduction



III. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

A. Inductive vs. Deductive

- * Induction: seeing, examining, recording “facts”... then drawing a conclusion.
- * Deduction: proposing or formulating an idea... then seeking “facts” that support the idea.

B. Inductive Bible study

Requires...

1. Carefully reading (re-reading) of the Biblical text (passage).
2. Observing the literary structure of the text (key words, strong verbs, linking words, comparisons and so forth).
3. Recording the fruits of observation of the text.
4. Asking good questions of the text (who? what? when? where? why? how?).

Inductive Bible Study focuses on “facts”...

- Words and word relationships
- structure
- context
- literary devices
- mood and atmosphere
- fundamental questions
- and...*
- historical background
- geographical setting
- cultural clues
- language insights

Ezra—Our Model

VERBAL IDEAS from Ezra 7:10	LAW OF BIBLE STUDY	PRIMARY CONCERN
“set his heart”		
“study”		
“practice”		
“teach”		

IV. A MODEL STUDENT FOR INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY... EZRA

A. Introduction

Ezra 7:10 NASB

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel...

1. Read the verse carefully several times.
2. What do you see? Gather the facts.
Circle key words. Underline strong verbs.
Notice the literary structure. Other...
3. Note the chart on the preceding page.



“It’s not great literature, but it will look good on the coffee table.”

They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses.

Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion.

Ezra opened the book... the people all stood up...

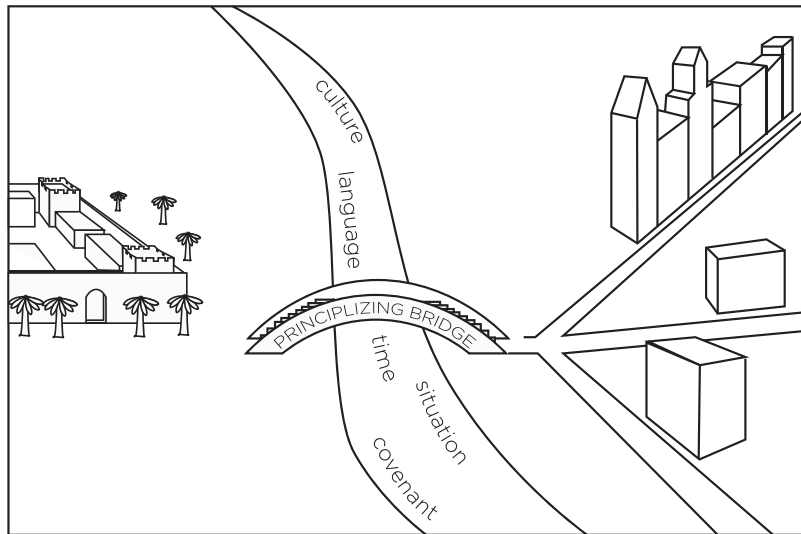
They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, “This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep...”

For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

—NEHEMIAH 8

Bridging from the Biblical Context to the Present Day



Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 24

PASSAGE
(Historical)



PRINCIPLE
(Timeless)



PRACTICE
(Timely)

V. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

5 Laws of Bible Study

1. The Law of OBSERVATION

What do I see?

2. The Law of INTERPRETATION

What does it mean?

3. The Law of APPLICATION

How does it work?

4. The Law of CORRELATION

Where does it fit?

5. The Law of COMMUNICATION

How do I share?

Asking the Fundamental Questions

Asking simple questions such as those suggested below can be your most important tool for making exciting discoveries in observation.

Who?

- Who is this passage talking about?
- Who are these words addressed to?
- Who wrote or spoke these words?

What?

- What kind of passage is this? Poetry? Narrative? Direct teaching? Prophetic?
- What is the atmosphere of this passage? Calm? Emotionally intense? Fearful? Rejoicing?
- What happens in this passage?
- What preceded this passage and what follows it?
- What do I learn about God, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit in this passage?
- What difficult words are here and what do they mean?
- What will happen if I follow this person's example?
- What will happen if I obey the command God gives here?
- What will happen if I later ignore what I'm learning in this passage?

Where? When?

- Where does the action in this passage take place?
- When did the action occur?

Why?

- Why did the speaker or writer communicate these words?
- Why did God allow this to happen?
- Why did Jesus say what He did?

How?

- How should this passage affect my life?
- How would I have handled the situation presented in this passage?
- How did God work in someone's life in this passage?
- How does this passage relate to other parts of Scripture?

—R. Yohn, *First Hand Joy*, 20

VI. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY:

Observation: What do I see?

A. First Impressions

Read the passage carefully (and repeatedly).

Ask the fundamental questions of Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? (Don't get bogged down with answering all of the questions... that comes later...just ask the hard "observational" questions.)

Note the helpful guide on the preceding page.

B. Fundamental Questions: Practice

Romans 12:1-2 NASB

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

Inductive Bible Study and Reading the Text

- Read **repeatedly**.
- Read **carefully**.
- Read **purposefully**.
- Read **consistently**.
- Read with an **open mind** and a **ready pencil**.
- Learn to use circles, underlines, brackets, numbering, arrows, asterisks, question marks, and the like...
- Create your own Bible **marking** system.

Read the passage several times.

³²Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. ³³When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

³⁵The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.”

³⁶The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar ³⁷and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

³⁸There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”

⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under

the same sentence? ⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴²Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

⁴³Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

⁴⁶Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

⁴⁷The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” ⁴⁸When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. ⁴⁹But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. —Luke 23:32-49 NIV

WHO <i>list persons</i>	WHAT <i>they did</i>	HOW <i>they responded to Jesus</i>	HOW <i>Jesus responded</i>
criminal 1			
criminal 2			
soldiers			
centurion			
the people			
women			
Jesus			

2 Timothy 3:14-17 NASB

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

All Scripture is

...inspired by God
...profitable (for man)

1. teaching
2. reproof
3. correction
4. training

...so that...
• adequate
• equipped

Practice: Fundamental Questions

Exodus 2:23-25 NIV

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

John 11:35 NASB

Jesus wept.

Can you follow the pattern of asking fundamental questions of this brief passage? Try and see.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

THINKING AHEAD

Asking the “Fundamental Questions” often leads the interpreter to examine the context (that which goes before...that which comes after). Do you see the value as you look at one brief verse, but need more information?

In “Interpretation” (Law 2) the importance of context (verse, sentence, paragraph, chapter, so forth) cannot be overstated.

CONTEXT

Jesus wept.

Context deals with what comes before and what comes after a passage under study.

- Jesus with Martha and Mary...distress over Lazarus' death.
- Broader context: Earlier, Jesus requested to come to Lazarus who was sick.
- Broader: soon Jesus will enter Jerusalem for His last week of life (next chapter).
- Broader: the public ministry of Jesus is near to a close... His death is on the near horizon.
- Broader: Why did Jesus die? Why do people die? Sin of humanity and death?
- So forth...

Practice: Identify Key Words

Circle what you consider to be a key word or words in the following passages (also mentally ask your “Fundamental Questions”).

Romans 8:1 NASB

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

John 17:3 NASB

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

2 Corinthians 5:20 NASB

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

RESOURCES

Often a key word is an important theological concept (reconciliation, condemnation, so forth). Bible Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Theological Dictionaries can often provide a concise article on the word/concept.

Refer to Appendix A, page 91, for a listing of “Essential Tools for Bible Study.”

C. Key Words

Often Biblical passages use important, key words or terms. Identifying a key word (in the Observation phase) is critical to the later understanding of the text.

Read the following verse. What do you think is the key word (or key words)? What questions does this verse raise in your mind?

LADIES

Ephesians 5:22 NIV

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

MEN

Ephesians 5:25 NIV

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

EVERYONE

Ephesians 6:1 NIV

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Key Words

...any of a number of **important** terms (concepts, people, places, things...) that are **important** to grasping the meaning of the text.

...therefore, the serious student of the Word will have access to a “toolbox” of handy tools/aids for understanding key words.

- Bible Dictionaries
- Bible Encyclopedias
- Concordances
- Bible Atlas (maps)
- Bible Handbooks

See Appendix A for further information.

Repeated Key Words: Observation

Hebrews 11:1-6 NIV

¹ Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for.

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴ By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

D. Repeated Key Words

On occasion the Scriptures will repeat a number of times a particular word or phrase. This is often an interpretive or clue indicator of the importance of the repeated word in the passage.

Read Joshua 3:1-13 and circle every occurrence of the phrase “ark of the covenant” or “ark.”

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. ²After three days the officers went throughout the camp, ³giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. ⁴Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark; do not go near it.” ⁵Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.” ⁶Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they took it up and went ahead of them. ⁷And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁸Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’” ⁹Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. ¹⁰This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. ¹¹See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. ¹²Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. ¹³And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.”

GO TO PAGE 27

Additional Search

- Box all geographical places or tribal peoples.
- Double-box all proper names or classes of people.
- Double-underline any theological terms that might be important to the text.

Word Meaning

...consult a Bible Dictionary for the article on the “Ark of the Covenant.” The article will provide helpful background material.

See “Essential Tools” on page 91 for reference works.

Joshua 1:1-9

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

- Key Words? Repeated words (or phrases)?

- Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

- Mood or atmosphere of this passage?

- Learning about Moses? Joshua?

Based on **Joshua 3:1-13** from page 25

Now, mentally ask “Fundamental Questions” regarding this text.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

RECALL...

the example of Ezra.

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel.

—EZRA 7:10

LAW OF OBSERVATION

Fundamental Questions

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

- Key Words

- Repeated Key Words

Value of the Word

Independent Study Project:

* Read Psalm 119 (all 176 verses). Can you find the three or four verses that do not specifically mention “the word” (or its various synonyms... e.g. “statutes,” “judgments,” et al.)?

List all of the various, different words used to refer to the Word of God.

Or, mark in your Bible (underline) all the various occurrences of the Word (or synonyms for the Scriptures/Word).

5 LAWS OF BIBLE STUDY

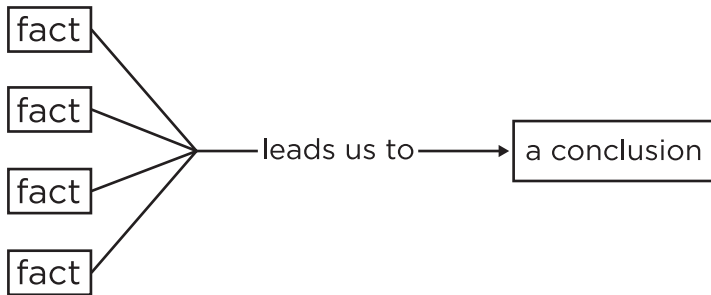
1. Law of Observation: “What Do I See?”
2. Law of Interpretation: “What Does It Mean?”
3. Law of Application: “How Does It Work?”
4. Law of Correlation: “Where Does It Fit?”
5. Law of Communication: “How Do I Share?”

Session Two

I. REVIEW SESSION ONE: INTRO

A. The Word of God has benefit (value) for our lives.

B. Inductive Bible Study



Observation → Interpretation

C. Example of Ezra

Ezra 7:10

* Commitment....."devoted himself"

* Study....."the study"

* Practice....."observance"

* Teach....."teaching"

D. 5 Laws of Bible Study

See preceding page.

He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded.

—PROVERBS 13:13

Facts → Conclusion

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

—EZRA 7:10

“...I was always oppressed with a sense of my own stupidity in my dealings with Sherlock Holmes. Here I had heard what he had heard, I had seen what he had seen, and yet from his words it was evident that he saw clearly not only what had happened, but what was about to happen, while to me the whole business was still confused and grotesque.”

– THE REDHEADED LEAGUE

Inductive Bible Study and Crime Scene Investigation

- proceed slowly
 - see everything
 - observe all the clues
 - arrive at the truth
-

II. LAW OF OBSERVATION: REVIEW

A. LOOK FOR ... “Fundamental Questions”

B. LOOK FOR ... “Key Words”

C. LOOK FOR ... “Repeated Key Words”

A KEY THOUGHT:

The more time you spend in fruitful observation,
the less time you will spend in aimless interpretation.

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

Seeing the Text...
with a pencil!

Use underlines,
boxes, and so forth to
highlight key words or
repeated key words.

Therefore there is now
no condemnation
for those who are
in Christ Jesus.

—ROMANS 8:1

“CREEP”

observable elements within a text that pull, tug, influence the reader

1. COMMANDS

James 4:7-8a

Submit yourselves then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.

2. REBUKES

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief...?

3. EXHORTATIONS

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

4. EXAGGERATION

Matthew 5:29-30

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away...”

5. PROMISES

2 Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

III. LOOK FOR ... “CREEP”

A. Observation takes time



To truly observe, "slow down" the observation process in order "to see," that is, "to truly see" the Scriptures; learn "to creep."

B. “CREEP” along as you observe

1. Look for COMMANDS
2. Look for REBUKES
3. Look for EXHORTATIONS
4. Look for EXAGGERATIONS
5. Look for PROMISES

“You see with the eyes, you observe with your mind.”

REFLECT:

How does “CREEP” found within a passage affect the reader intellectually, emotionally, spiritually?

e.g:
how does a “command” affect the reader

Read the Text!
Observe the Text!
Feel the Text!

N.B. the principle of “CREEP” relates to the feel of the text...how so?

“CREEP” Practice

1. Luke 14:26

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.”

Observational Principle: _____

2. 2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Observational Principle: _____

3. Proverbs 24:10

If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!

Observational Principle: _____

Proverbs 29:23

A man’s pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

Observational Principle: _____

4. Galatians 5:16

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Observational Principle: _____

5. Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Observational Principle: _____

C. “CREEP” PRACTICE

Try to find one or more of the “CREEP” observational principles in the passages on the preceding page.

1. COMMAND:

- imperative
- urge
- order
- let us
- beseech

2. REBUKES:

- reprove
- scold
- reprimand
- censure
- admonish

3. EXHORTATIONS:

- exhort
- encourage
- urge
- insist
- press on
- implore

4. EXAGGERATIONS:

- overstate
- inflate
- embellish
- hyperbole

5. PROMISES:

- vow
- assure
- pledge
- if...then

Commands
Rebukes
Exhortations
Exaggerations
Promises

Examples:

Eat the donut now!

Really, you cannot eat another donut.

Eating donuts will always make you feel better.

Eat another donut and you'll explode.

If you eat another donut, then you will not be hungry for dinner.

“CREEP”

How does the passage affect me...?

How do I *feel*...?

“Peering into the mists of gray
That shroud the surface of the bay.
Nothing I see except a veil
Of fog surrounding every sail.
Then suddenly against a cape
A vast and silent form takes shape,
A great ship lies against the shore
Where nothing has appeared before.

Who sees a truth must often gaze
Into a fog for many days;
It may seem very sure to him
Nothing is there but mist-clouds dim.
Then, suddenly, his eyes will see
A shape where nothing used to be.
Discoveries are missed each day
By men who turn too soon away.”

– CLARENCE EDWARD FLYNN

D. Observational Principles

LOOK FOR...

a. James 1:2-8 NASB

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Pencil ready!

- Key Words?
- Repeated Key Words?

Ⓞ Commands?

Ⓞ Rebukes?

Ⓞ Exhortation?

Ⓞ Exaggerations?

Ⓞ Promises?

Exhortation

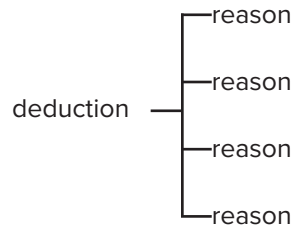
perfect? what does this mean?

command? requirement?

key word

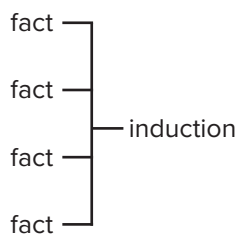
promise

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."



“I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction. ‘When I hear you give your reasons,’ I remarked, ‘the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled, until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours.’

‘Quite so,’ he answered,... ‘You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.’



‘Frequently.’

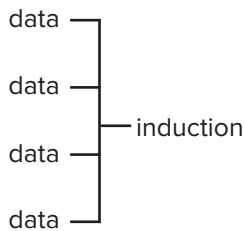
‘How often?’

‘Well, some hundreds of times.’

‘Then how many are there?’

‘How many! I don’t know.’

‘Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed.’” *–A Scandal in Bohemia*



“I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts.”

–A Scandal in Bohemia

“The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.”

–The Hound of the Baskervilles

—Insights from Sherlock Holmes

b. **Mark 10:23-31** NASB

²³ And Jesus, looking around, *said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus *answered again and *said to them, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ They were even more astonished and said to Him, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ Looking at them, Jesus *said, “With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You.” ²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, ³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.”

- Key Words?
- Repeated Key Words?

Ⓞ Commands?

Ⓞ Rebukes?

Ⓞ Exhortation?

Ⓞ Exaggerations?

Ⓞ Promises?

Repeated Key Words: Observation

Hebrews 11:1-6

¹Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for. ³By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Session Three

I. REVIEW

A. 5 Laws of Bible Study

B. Law of Observation: Look for...

1. "Fundamental Questions"

2. "Key Words"

3. "Repeated Key Words"

4. "CREEP"

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application
- Correlation
- Communication

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

Ⓞ Commands?

Ⓞ Rebukes?

Ⓞ Exhortation?

Ⓞ Exaggerations?

Ⓞ Promises?

In practicing the **Law of Observation,**

we are not yet asking what does the passage mean...

Observation asks, "What does the passage say?" (What do I see?)

Cause/Effect Practice:

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Cause?

Effect?

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Cause?

Effect?

II. OBSERVATION: LOOK FOR...

New things to observe (look for, find) in the Biblical text.

A. "Cause/Effect"

1. Often a **cause** will be declared and then the stated **effect** of that cause will be given.

Proverbs 15:1

*A gentle answer
turns away wrath...*

CAUSE? _____

EFFECT? _____

*...but a harsh word
stirs up anger.*

CAUSE? _____

EFFECT? _____

2. Practice

Romans 6:23

*For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God is eternal
life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

CAUSE? _____

EFFECT? _____

Do you see two cause/effects?

More Observational Principles

OBSERVE...

- see
- perceive
- notice
- detect
- look at
- examine
- discover

Closely related to
"Cause/Effect" is
Reasons or Results
for Doing Things;
look for...

"if... then"
"because... then"

Comparison Practice

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

What is the man like?

What does the comparison suggest about man and life choices?

Comparisons

Proverbs 25:11-14

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

¹²*Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.*

¹³*Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters.*

¹⁴*Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of gifts he does not give.*

NOTE: We are not yet interpreting (observations first)...but what do these comparisons ("similes") suggest about the meaning of each proverb?

B. Comparisons/Contrasts

1. Comparisons:

Focus on how things are similar (items, ideas, people compared to others).

Proverbs 25:26

*Like a muddied spring or a polluted well
is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked.*

2. Practice:

James 3:3-6 compares the tongue to three things...

Read the passage carefully; underline tongue and circle the comparisons:

³*When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.* ⁴*Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.*

⁵*Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.*

⁶*The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.*

More Observational Principles

Figures of Speech

SIMILE:

a comparison using “like” or “as”

Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passerby who meddles in a quarrel not his own.

—PROVERBS 26:17

METAPHOR:

a comparison not using “like” or “as”

The Lord is my rock,
my fortress and my deliverer...

—PSALM 18:2

Contrast Practice

Psalm 1:1-6

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ²But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. (1-3)

⁴Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. (4-6)

What is the contrast?

What does it suggest about man and life choices?

3. Contrasts:

Focus on how things are different (items, ideas, people contrasted to others).

Proverbs 14:31

*He who oppresses the poor
shows contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to
the needy honors God.*

James 4:6

*God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.*

4. Practice:

Note 1 John 1:5-7

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

What is the major contrast?

Are there other contrasts?

**More
Observational
Principles**

Contrasts
look for “but”..

(often an important
interpretive point)

The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.”

But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God.

—2 KINGS 17:13-14

Historical Context

2 Kings 17:13

The northern kingdom of Israel was warned by the Lord to “turn from your evil ways.”

Israel responded to that warning in 2 Kings 17:14-17.

Practice:

Underline and number in the following passage as many different ways/practices that characterize Israel’s rebellion to the Lord’s warning.

Note that this is a “list” of rebellious practices.

2 Kings 17:14-17

But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do.

¹⁶ *They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. ¹⁷ They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.*

5. Lists:

Often in Scripture there will be a list of several things presented...

Are they in some kind of order?

Are they grouped in a special way?

Are they progressing to a climax?

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

6. Practice:

Read **1 John 2:15-17**

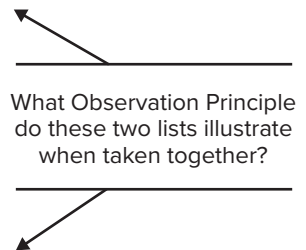
Number the things in the world in this list.

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

¹⁷The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

**More
Observational
Principles**

Tip:
...when identifying lists, often it is helpful to number these in your Bible.



What Observation Principle do these two lists illustrate when taken together?

Key Words

Read the following passages carefully. Circle the important word(s) that are most important to understanding the text.

John 17:3 NASB

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

I Corinthians 15:1-2 NASB

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

Key Repeated Words

Luke 15:1-10

Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents...”

Key Repeated Words

Matthew 5:3-12 NASB

³ *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴ *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

⁵ *“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.*

⁶ *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

⁷ *“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

⁸ *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

⁹ *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

¹⁰ *“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

Session Four

I. REVIEW

- What do I see?

LAW OF _____

- What does it mean?

LAW OF _____

- How does it work?

LAW OF _____

- Where does it fit?

LAW OF _____

- How do I share?

LAW OF _____

II. LAW OF OBSERVATION

A. Look for... (?) (?) (?)...

Fundamental Questions

B. Look for...Key Words

See Practice: previous page

Look for Repeated Key Words

See Practice: previous page

5 Laws of Bible Study

Fundamental
Questions

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

In the beginning

WHAT BEGINNING?

God

WHO?

WHAT WORD IS THIS?

EL? ELOHIM? YHWH?

created

HOW? WHEN? WHAT
DOES THE WORD MEAN?

the heavens

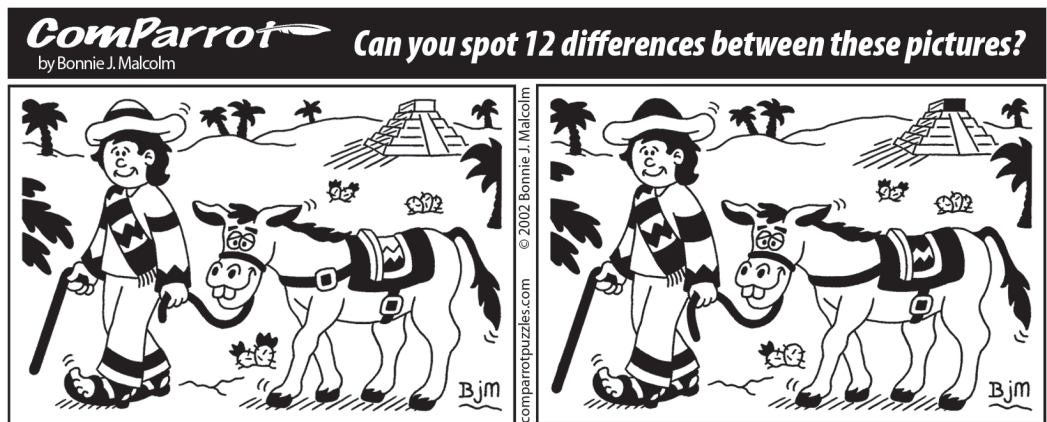
WHAT IS THIS?
ANCIENT COSMOLOGIES?

and the earth.

THE GLOBE?
THE LAND? WHAT?

—GENESIS 1:1

Comparison and Contrast Exercise



Find 12 Differences:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

SOLUTION: 1. Buckle on saddle is missing. 2. Tree on horizon is missing. 3. Flower on cactus is missing. 4. Top of sombrero is moved. 5. Top of saddle pattern is colored in. 6. Top of pyramid is colored in. 7. Cactus has moved. 8. Top leaf on branch at left has moved. 9. Brim on sombrero is wider. 10. Stripe on shirt sleeve is taller. 11. Rope is longer. 12. Walking cane is taller.

C. Look for “CREEP” (feeling the “pull” of the passage upon us)

© →

® →

® →

® →

® →

D. Look for “Cause-Effect”

“If...then...”

“Because...then...”

E. Look for “Comparison/Contrasts”

F. Look for Lists

CREEP

Resist the devil...

—JAMES 4:7

Therefore, rebuke them sharply...

—TITUS 1:13

Encourage one another...

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:11, 4:18

—2 CORINTHIANS 13:11

—HEBREWS 3:13

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out...

—MATTHEW 5:29 ESV

Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you...

—JAMES 4:8

COMPARISONS

Similes?

- “like”
- “as”

Metaphors?

- not using like or as

Practice Connectives

Discover a connective, linking word in each of the following passages.
What does it seem to introduce?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:2-3 NASB

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,...

Psalms 95:1-3 NASB

O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.² Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.³ For the LORD is a great God and a great King above all gods.

III. OBSERVATION

A. Connectives

Connectives are linking words that “connect” ideas and relationships. They might be prepositions or conjunctions.

CONTRAST

Proverbs 28:1 NASB

*The wicked flee when no one is pursuing,
(But) the righteous are bold as a lion.*

CONDITION

1 John 1:9 NASB

(If) we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

REASON OR RESULT

1 Peter 5:7 NASB

...casting all your anxiety on Him, (because) He cares for you.

PURPOSE

Psalms 119:11 NASB

*Your word I have treasured in my heart,
(That) I may not sin against You.*

Strive to not simply see, but OBSERVE.

“but” – contrast

“if” – conditional sentence

“for”
“because”
“therefore”
“so that” } reason or result

“that”
“in order that” } purpose

Insert the phrase, “in order that,” to observe purpose.

Practice Verbs/Verbals

Exodus 2:23-25

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

- Underline the verbs related to the Israelites.
- Double-underline the verbs related to God.
- What thoughts come to mind (in light of this)?

1 Samuel 5:1-5

After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. ² Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. ³ When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place.

⁴ But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. ⁵ That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

B. Verbs, Verbals

The action of a sentence can be found in the verb or verbals that explain what is happening.

Read carefully the following passage. Underline the verbs and reflect upon the meaning/choice of these action-words.

Psalm 78:72

And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.

Reflect: How do these verbal words help us understand David's leadership?

Psalm 42:1-2a

*As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, O God.
² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

Nehemiah 4:1

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews...

Some time later
God tested Abraham...

“Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering..”

—GENESIS 22 :1-2

The underlined verbs are imperative commands in Hebrew.

David's question of Saul who was pursuing to kill him:

“Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.”

—1 SAMUEL 24:14-15

Note/underline the verbal ideas

Observation Practice

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

This is what the Lord says:

“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, ²⁴but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord.

C. Practice: What Do You See?

Try making observations on **Philippians 2:1-4**:

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ,

if any comfort from his love,

if any fellowship with the Spirit,

if any tenderness and compassion,

²then make my joy complete by being like-minded,

having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,

but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Each of you should look ⁴not only to your own interests,

but also to the interests of others.

Try making observations on **John 3:16**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

“Look for...” CHECKLIST

- Questions
- Key Words
- Repeated Key Words
- Commands
 - Rebutes
 - Exhortations
 - Exaggerations
 - Promises
- Cause–Effect
- Comparisons/
Contrasts
- Lists
- Connectives
 - but
 - if
 - for/because
 - therefore/so that
 - that/in order that
- Verbs/Verbals

continued from following page 61

“Then how did you know?”

“I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?”

“My dear Holmes,” said I, “this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess, but as I have changed my clothes I can’t imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice; but there, again, I fail to see how you work it out.”

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long, nervous hands together.

“It is simplicity itself,” said he. “My eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot slitting specimen of the London slaver. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull, indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession.”

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction. “When I hear you give your reasons,” I remarked, “the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours.”

“Quite so,” he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. “**You see, but you do not observe.**”

IV. CONCLUSION

The First Law of Bible Study is “The Law of Observation.”

Read the following excerpt from the life of that astute “observer,” Sherlock Holmes.

Lessons from Sherlock Holmes

One night—it was on the twentieth of March 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their story. He was at work again. He had risen out of the drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber, which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

“Wedlock suits you,” he remarked. “I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.”

“Seven!” I answered.

“Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into the harness.”

continued on previous page

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle,
“A Scandal in Bohemia,”
in *The Original
Illustrated Sherlock
Holmes*

“You see [Watson], but
you do not observe.”
the big idea of the story

5 Laws of Bible Study

- Law 1:** OBSERVATION: “What Do I See?”
- Law 2:** INTERPRETATION: “What Does It Mean?”
- Law 3:** APPLICATION: “How Does It Work?”
- Law 4:** CORRELATION: “Where Does It Fit?”
- Law 5:** COMMUNICATION: “How Do I Share?”

Law of Observation: Session 1-4 in *Personal Bible Study*

Law of Interpretation: Session 5-6

Literary Context

1. Narrative
2. Legal
3. Poetry
4. Wisdom
5. Logical discourse (epistles/letters)
6. Prophetic

Session Five

I. INTRODUCTION

From the Five Laws of Bible Study (See page 62)

#1 Law of Observation

#2 Law of Interpretation

II. LAW OF INTERPRETATION

interpretation...

explanation...

meaning...

understanding

To understand the meaning of a Biblical text requires a careful look at the contexts (and there is more than one context!).

III. LITERARY CONTEXT

Not all of the Bible is written in the same way. There is a difference between history, poetry and prophecy (the major components of the Old Testament). Gospels and Epistles are quite different.

The Bible is actually a collection of books written by many authors, in different literary styles, over several hundreds of years. The Bible is a collection of many books within the Book. Knowing the kind of literary types is indispensable to understanding.

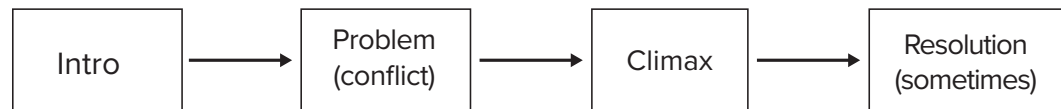
The more time you spend in fruitful observation, the less time you spend in aimless interpretation.

A text without a context is a pretext.

Advanced Thinking

Narratives as Stories:

Look for the elements common to a story:



Types of Narratives

1. **Tragedy:** the decline of a person
*See Life of David, Solomon, Samson
2. **Epic:** long narrative around a theme/people
*See Wilderness Sojourn or Exodus from Egypt
3. **Heroic:** the exploits of a hero, leader (example)
*See Joseph, Abraham, Daniel
4. **Polemic:** attacking/refuting views of others
*Elijah and prophets of Baal

A. Narrative

Narrative is a story (history) but one intended to convey a message (or purpose).

2 Samuel 11:1

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

Luke 4:1-2a

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

Acts 6:1

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

“Broad Narrative” sections of the Bible include:

- Pentateuch (Books of Moses)
- Joshua—Esther
- Gospels
- Acts

STORIES...

- Intro
- Problem (plot)
- Climax
- Conclusion (resolution)

REFLECT:

Consider Exodus 1-12 and the deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Intro?

Problem (plot)?

Climax?

Resolution?

Legal

Exodus 20:1-17

Poetry

...as found in the Hebrew Scriptures, is characterized by:

EMOTION AND FEELING

Ecclesiastes 1:2

“Meaningless! Meaningless!”

says the Teacher.

“Utterly meaningless!

Everything is meaningless.”

PARALLELISM OF IDEA (not rhyming)

Psalms 2:4 NASB

He who sits in the heavens laughs,

The Lord scoffs at them.

Psalms 34:10

The lions may grow weak and hungry,

but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Psalms 1:3

He is like a tree planted by streams of water,

which yields its fruit in season

and whose leaf does not wither.

Whatever he does prospers.

HIGHLY FIGURATIVE (vibrant figures of speech)

Habakkuk 1:8

Their horses are swifter than leopards,

fiercer than wolves at dusk.

RHYTHMIC

rhyming was not characteristic of Hebrew poetry, but there is a definite rhythmic meter (accenting) in the original language.

SYNONYMOUS

repeat same idea

ANTITHETIC

contrast ideas

SYNTHETIC

building upon
a thought

B. Legal

Legal literary type speaks of “law” or “commands.” It is prevalent in Exodus 20-40, Leviticus, portions of Numbers and most of Deuteronomy.

C. Poetry

The Bible contains Hebrew poetry, characterized by imagery, poetic structure, emotion and feeling.

Psalm 101:1-2

*I will sing of your love and justice;
to you, O LORD, I will sing praise.
²I will be careful to lead a blameless life—
when will you come to me?
I will walk in my house with blameless heart.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

Isaiah 9:6-7

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷Of the increase of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.*

In legal literature ask “to whom is this addressed?”

“Is this still binding today?”

OT Poetry

- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Solomon

NT Poetry

- Song of Mary, words of Zechariah
—LUKE 1

OT Prophecy

- also is found in poetic form

Wisdom

...found in two types of Wisdom Literature:

- 1. Proverbial Literature**

Book of Proverbs

- 2. Reflective Literature**

Job or Ecclesiastes

Logical Discourse

...epistles include two types of discourse:

- 1. Epistolary discourse:**

expounds an argument, a truth or doctrine in a careful, logical manner.

- 1 John 1:5-7**

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

- 2. Hortatory (exhorting or encouraging) discourse:**

exhorts to follow certain courses of action or develop moral, ethical, spiritual qualities.

- Romans 12:1-2**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

D. Wisdom

Characterized by general truths or maxims that are based on life experiences and observations.

These are precepts, not promises.

Proverbs 22:6

*Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

E. Logical Discourse (Epistles)

The NT epistle is a logical discourse that addresses matters of concern for individuals, churches and Christians in general.

The interpreter must ask the question of whether the discourse is **for a moment-in-time only...**

2 Timothy 4:21

Do your best to get here before winter.

Or is the teaching universal and true **for all time** (all believers)...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Be joyful always; ¹⁷pray continually; ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

All Wisdom
Literature is poetry..
*not all poetry is
Wisdom Literature*

Logical Discourse
Romans to Jude (NT)

Observation about Paul's Epistles:
Often you can discern at least two broad sections to his discourses: doctrine and practice.

EPHESIANS 1-3:
DOCTRINE

EPHESIANS 4-6:
PRACTICE

Daniel 9:24-27

“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. ²⁵Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

F. Prophetic

Preaching and prophesying material that condemns, rebukes, encourages and promises.

Some prophetic prophecy can predict future events.

Isaiah 9:1-2, 6-7

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan— ²The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned...

⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

G. Summary

In order to interpret correctly, (first) determine what kind of literary context you are dealing with:

- is it narrative (story)?
- is it wisdom?
- is it legal?
- is it discourse?
- is it poetry?
- is it prophetic?

(Then) using your observations, begin to ask, "What does it mean?"

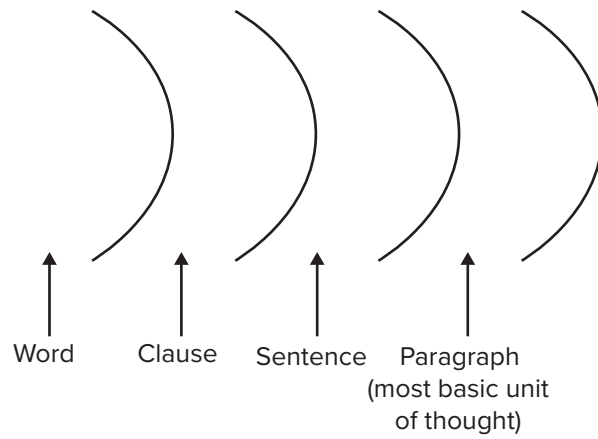
Thinking Deeply

- Is this prophetic passage about the First Coming of the Messiah or the Second Coming?
- Can prophetic Scripture that predicts events compress two distinct time frames into one passage?
- Double Fulfillment in prophecy:
...a partial fulfillment of a passage with a yet distant, deeper (fuller) fulfillment.
...SEE ISAIAH 7:14

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

Broad Interpretive Context *More detail*

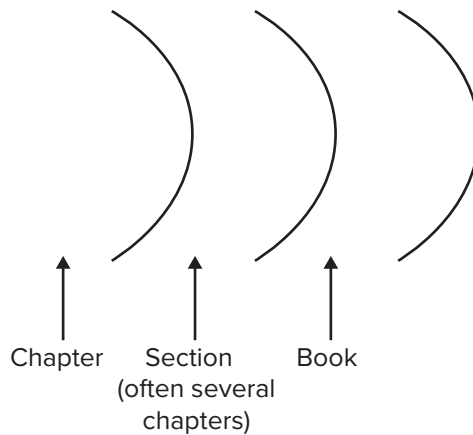
Grammatical Context:



Interpretive Clues:

- Look for structure
- Look for central idea
- Look before and after (near context)

Book Context:



Interpretive Clues:

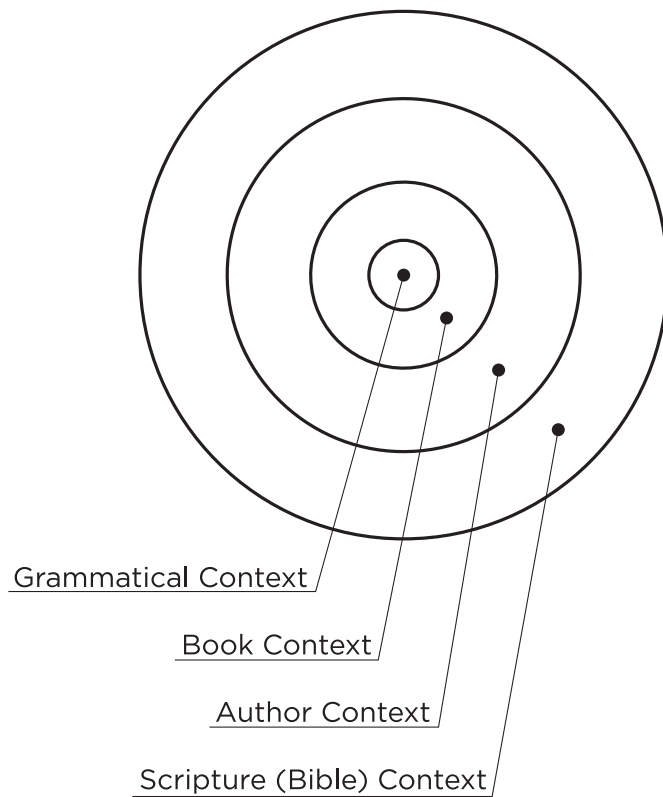
- Look for **themes**
- Look for breadth or development of **main ideas**
- Look for “broad” structure (far context)

IV. GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

To interpret (therefore, understand), first, look at the type of literature...

Next, note the grammatical structure of the passage. Understand that it is part of a wholistic look at the passage in its much greater Scripture-wide context.

Note the broad “Interpretive Context” below.



If one does not know what it meant to the original audience, how can one apply it to the present audience?

Refer to preceding page for further detail.

For example, using the concentric circles of context, locate John 3:16 at the center and fill in insights for each of the outer contexts.

Word Studies

- to understand the meaning of a passage may require knowing the meaning of a key word.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- use Concordances (to see how a word is translated throughout the Bible); also use Bible Dictionaries (e.g. *New Ungers* or *Vine's NT Dictionary*)

CONFESSION (Hebrew from *yadâ*, lit., to “use,” i.e...extend the hand). Used in the Old Testament in the sense of acknowledging one’s sin (Leviticus 5:5; Job 40:14; Psalm 32:5). In the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the Temple he uses the expression “confess Thy name” (1 Kings 8:33, 35; 2 Chron. 6:24, 26), doubtless meaning the acknowledgment of Jehovah as the one against whom the Israelites might sin, and the justice of punishment meted out by Him.

**The Greek, word rendered “confession” is *homologeō*, lit., to “say the same thing,” i.e., not to deny and so to admit or declare one’s self guilty of what he is accused. It is also used in the sense of a *profession*, implying the yielding or change of one’s conviction (John 12:42; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:13; etc.).

CONFESS. CONFESSION

A. Verbs.

I. HOMOLOGEO (*ὁμολογέω*), lit. to speak the same thing (*homos*, same, *lego*, to speak), to assent, accord, agree with, denotes. either (a) to confess. declare. admit; John 1:20; e.g. • Acts 24:14; Hebrews 2:13; (b) to confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of. the result of inward conviction. I John 1:9; (e) to declare openly byway of speaking out freely, such confession being the effect of deep conviction of facts, Matthew 7:23; 10:32 (twice) and Luke 12:8 (see next paragraph); John 9:22; 12:42; Acts 23:8; Romans 10:9, 10 (“confession is made”); I Timothy 6:12RV; Titus 1:16; I John 2:23; 4:2, 15; II John 7 (in John’s Epp. it is the necessary antithesis to Gnostic doceticism); Revelation 3:5. in the best mss. (some have NO. 2 here); (d) to confess by way of celebrating with praise. Hebrews 13:15; (e) to promise. Matthew 14:7.

In Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8 the construction of this verb with *en*, in, followed by the dative case of the personal pronoun, has a special significance, namely, to confess in a person’s name, the nature of the confession being determined by the context, the suggestion being to make a public confession. Thus the statement, “every one...who shall confess Me (lit., in Me, i.e., in My case) before men, him (lit., in him i.e., in his case) will I also confess before My Father...” conveys the thought of confessing allegiance to Christ as one’s Master and Lord, and, on the other hand, of acknowledgment, on His part, of the faithful one as being His worshipper and servant. His loyal follower; this is appropriate to the original idea in *homologeō* of being identified in thought or language. See PROFESS, PROMISE, THANK.

New Unger's Bible Dictionary, Moody Press.

Expository Dictionary of NT Words, W.E. Vine, ed.

*also use Dictionaries of Theology (e.g. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Elwell, ed.) when the words have rich theological significance (e.g. righteousness, covenant, faith, et al.)

“Grammatical Context” includes...

- words
- sentences
- paragraphs

A. Words

- The basic building block of all communication is words (and what do they mean?)
- Importance of “word studies”

TOOLBOX RESOURCES

For Word Studies: Suggestions

- *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, R. K. Harrison, ed. Moody.
- *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible* (2 vols.), W. Elwell, ed. Baker.
- *NIV Exhaustive Concordance*, Goodrick and Kohlenberger, Zondervan, (or another based on your study Bible translation—KJV, NASB, ESV).
- *Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words*, W.E. Vine, ed. Revell.
- *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, W. Elwell, ed. Baker. (intermediate - advanced tool)

Remember the “Law of Observation” and “Key Words”?

Without the
right “tools”...

- a mechanic cannot repair a car
- a brickmason cannot build a wall
- a surgeon cannot operate
- a plumber cannot fix a leak
- a Bible student cannot mine the depths of Scripture

What is the Main Idea?

SENTENCE: Matthew 7:24

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

- What is the main idea?

- What is being said about it?

PARAGRAPH: Matthew 7:24-27

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

- What is the main idea?

- What is being said about it?

[For the paragraph, “mark up” the text with your observations]

B. Sentences

- a grammatical unit of thought that expresses a statement, also asks a question, issues a command (or wish or exclamation)
- look for the subject...
look for the verbs

2 Chronicles 7:14

“if my people who are called by name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

C. Paragraphs

- n. : a subdivision of a written composition that deals with one point (or gives the words of one speaker).

—*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

a paragraph is a **developed** unit of thought

a paragraph helps define the context of what the writer is conveying

Sentences are word relationships to produce a thought or idea.

if → then
cause/effect

people

- will humble
- pray
- seek
- turn

I (God)

- will hear
- will forgive
- (will) heal

N.B. paragraph context: Crucial to good interpretation

Practice: Acts 2:42-47^{NASB}

Snapshot of the Early, Healthy NT Church

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. ⁴⁶ Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Session Six

I. LAW OF OBSERVATION

II. LAW OF INTERPRETATION

A. Literary Context

B. Grammatical Context

C. Cultural Context

- the Bible is historical (people, events)
- the Bible is geographical (places)
- the Bible is cultural (Ancient Near East...ca. 1400 BC - AD 100)

LAW 1

What Do I See?

LAW 2

What Does It Mean?

Historical Toolbox

1. *The Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook* (Hays and Duval, eds.), Baker [Recent, helpful]
2. Norm Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the OT*, Wonder Book
3. Robert Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, Baker
4. *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (2 vols), Walvoord and Zuck, (eds.), Victor
5. soniclight.com (search for Tom Constable notes on all the Bible—free download)

Geographical Toolbox

1. *Baker's Encyclopedia of the Bible* (2 vols), W. Elwell (ed.), Baker
2. *NIV Atlas of the Bible*, C. Rasmussen, Zondervan
3. Bible Maps (in the back of most Bibles)

Cultural Toolbox

1. Commentaries (books that explain the meaning of the Bible by referring to language, culture, history, theology, et al.—from easy to read to highly technical)
2. *IVP Bible Background Commentary* (Old and New Testament available), Keener (ed), IV Press

III. CULTURAL CONTEXT

A. Historical

Much of the Bible is historical in nature...all of the Bible is set in an historical context (of some time period far removed from our present day).

See the previous page for resources that assist the serious student in historical background and interpretation.

B. Geographical

The drama of the Scripture story is played out on the “chessboard” of ancient Israel/the Middle East/the Greco-Roman empire.

Careful map work can aid the student in understanding.
(see previous page)

C. Cultural

The language and social customs and patterns of Bible times are ancient, near-eastern in practice, not modern western.

Cultural factors must be understood to enrich Bible understanding. (see previous page)

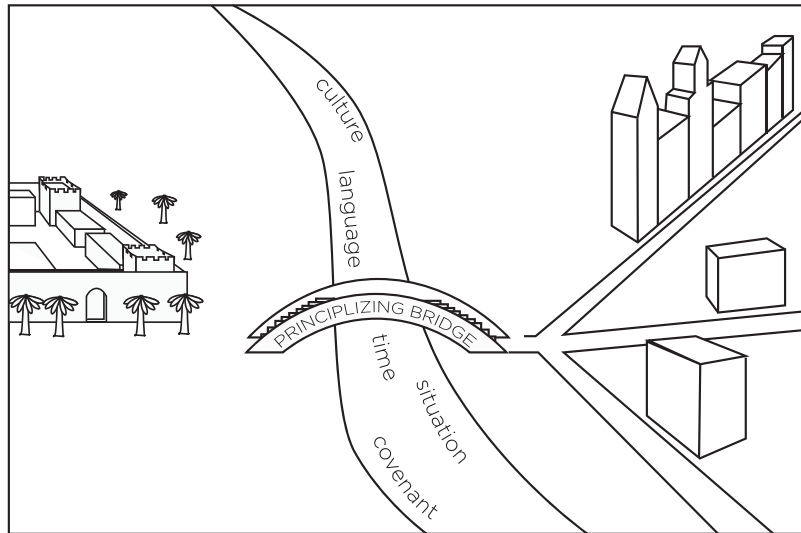
HISTORY...
the God who acts

GEOGRAPHY...
the chessboard upon
which God acts

CULTURE...
the milieu within
which God acts

James 1:22-25

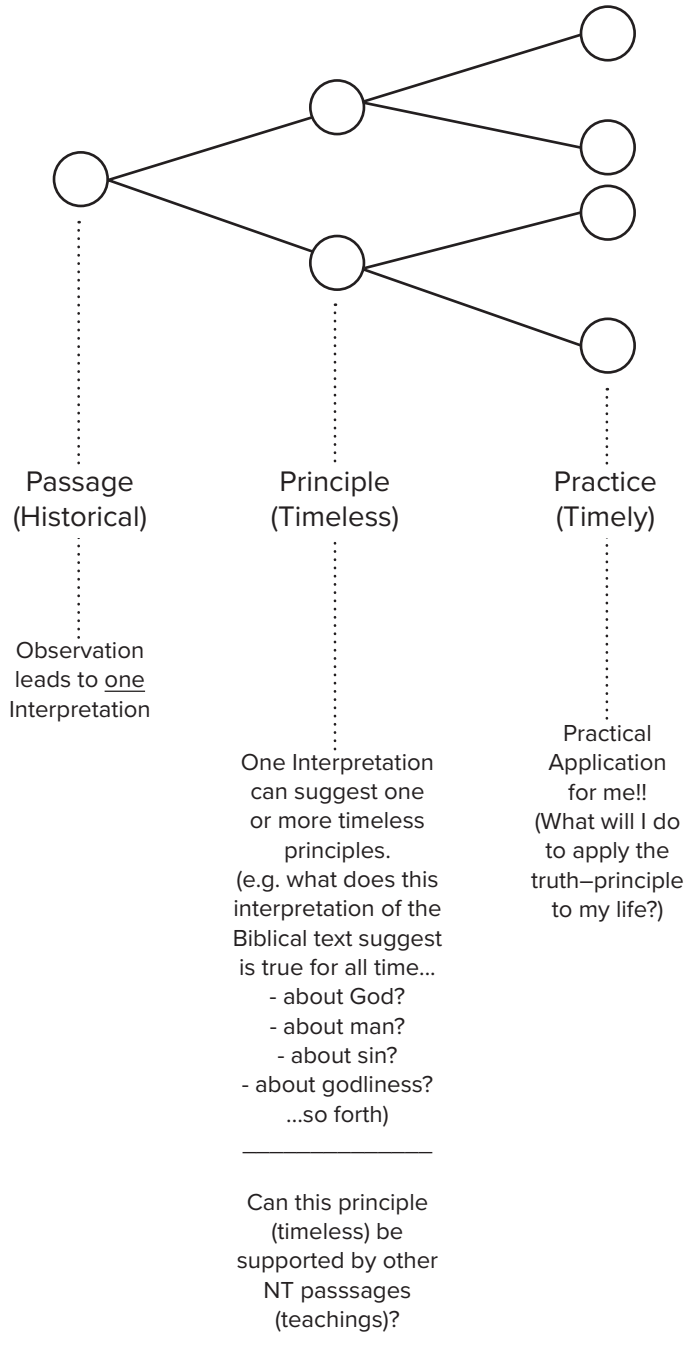
Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.



Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 24

IV. LAW OF APPLICATION

Consider what we've learned...



- One interpretation
- One or more principles
- Many applications

Key Idea!

Not all of the Bible is addressed **to** me (interpretation); but all of the Bible is **for** me (application).

APPLICATION GRID			
Passage:			
Vv.	Truth About God	Truth About Others	Truth About Me
Practice:			

Practice on James 1:2-8

APPLICATION GRID			
Passage: James 1:2-8			
Vv.	Truth About God	Truth About Others	Truth About Me
Practice:			

The Application Grid

...to help the student **apply** a Biblical “principle” (timeless truth), based upon a clear understanding of a Biblical “passage” (observation leading to interpretation), a helpful way to find a personal “practice” is to use an “application grid.”

Note the grid on the preceding page. This simple chart helps the student to personally think through principles-practices.

Try the exercise on **James 1:2-8**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,
³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*

⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

⁷That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

“Scripture was not given to increase our knowledge, but change our conduct.”

—ANDREW MURRAY

I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep your word.

—PSALM 119:101 NASB

Give me insight so I can do what you tell me—my whole life one long obedient response.

—PSALM 119 MSG

The Student, The Fish, and Agassiz

by the student

It was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well-grounded in all departments of zoology, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

“When do you wish to begin?” he asked.

“Now,” I replied.

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic “Very well,” he took from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

“Take this fish,” said he, “and look at it; we call it a Haemulon (pronounced Hem-yúlon); by and by I will ask what you have seen.”

With that he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object entrusted to me.

“No man is fit to be a naturalist,” said he, “who does not know how to take care of specimens.”

I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers and elegantly shaped exhibition jars; all

the old students will recall the huge, necklace glass bottles and their leaky, wax-besmeared corks, half eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a, cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor why had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish was infectious; and though this alcohol had “a very ancient and fishlike smell.” I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed when they discovered that no amount of Eau de Cologne would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor who had, however, left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, I found my specimen to be dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate it from a fainting spell, and looked with anxiety for a return of the normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, an hour, another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around, looked it in the face-ghastly; I looked at it from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three-quarters’ view-just as ghastly. I was in despair.

Continued on page 88

V. LAW OF CORRELATION

The Law of Correlation speaks of comparing Scripture to Scripture.

This acts as a check-and-balance to our “tentative” interpretations; as such, correlation occurs all along the Bible study process.

Some call this phase, “doing theology.”
How do other portions of Scripture add to or clarify our tentative interpretations?

Note the chart on Systematic Theology and the various doctrinal components. This discipline attempts to “systematize” all that the Scriptures teach about a particular subject.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

- I. Doctrine of the Bible
- II. Doctrine of God
- III. Doctrine of Angels, Demons, Satan
- IV. Doctrine of Man
- V. Doctrine of Sin
- VI. Doctrine of Christ
- VII. Doctrine of Salvation
- VIII. Doctrine of Holy Spirit
- IX. Doctrine of the Church
- X. Doctrine of the Last Things

Systematic Theology:

a branch and discipline of Biblical studies that arranges and systematizes truth in selected categories (e.g. the Biblical doctrine or teaching about man... et al.)

“We Believe”

(Survey of Theology)
...is a Core Training class taught by The Training Center.

TRAINING.FELLOWSHIPNWA.ORG

At an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so with infinite relief, I carefully replaced the fish in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation looked at it again. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish-it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my fingers down its throat to see how sharp its teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was nonsense. At last a happy thought struck me-I would draw the fish-and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

"That is right," said he, "a pencil is one of the best eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked." With these encouraging words he added, "Well, what is it like?"

He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me: the fringed gill-arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fin, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body.

When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment, he said, "You have not looked very carefully. And he continued, more earnestly, "You haven't seen one

of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself. Look again! Look again!" And he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish? But now I set myself to the task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and then, towards its close, the professor inquired, "Do you see it yet?"

"No," I replied, "I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before."

"That is next best," said he earnestly, "but I won't hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you then, before you look at the fish."

This was disconcerting. Not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be, but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring. Here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I that I should see for myself what he saw.

"Do you perhaps mean," I asked, "that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs?"

His thoroughly pleased, "Of course, of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he

Continued on page 90

VI. LAW OF COMMUNICATION

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

“Teach” means to communicate. Sharing the fruit of your Bible study with others brings at least eight positive results:

1. It “fleshes out” the truth of Scripture for others.
2. It clarifies and personalizes the truth within us.
3. It motivates us for further study.
4. It checks us against unbiblical thinking.
5. It builds and bonds friendships
6. It plants seeds of truth in other’s lives.
7. It turns us outward (not inward) in our life experiences.
8. It enlightens others in unlearned areas.

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I, he said, unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.
—ACTS 8:30-31

N.B. Thanks and a tip of the hat to Stephen R. Graves for these eight benefits.

had discoursed most happily and enthusiastically, as he always did, upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

“Oh, look at your fish!” he said, and then left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalogue.

“That is good, that is good!” he repeated, “but that is not all; go on.” And so, for three long days he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. “Look, look, look,” was his repeated injunction.

This was the best entomological lesson I ever had, a lesson whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study. It was a legacy the professor has left to me, as he left it to many others, a legacy of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

A year afterwards, some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the blackboard. We drew prancing starfishes; frogs in mortal combat; hydro-headed worms; stately crawfishes standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas; and grotesque fishes with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after, and was as much amused as any at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

“Haemulons, everyone of them,” he said, “Mr. ___ drew them.”

True; and to this day, if I attempt to draw a fish, I can draw nothing but Haemulons.

The fourth day a second fish of the same group was placed beside the

first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and difference between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves. The odor had become a pleasant perfume, and even now the sight of an old, six-inch, worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

The whole group of Haemulons was thus brought into view; and whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, preparation and examination of the bony framework, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz’s training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement, was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

“Facts are stupid things,” he would say, “until brought into connection with some general law.” At the end of eight months, it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

—Appendix *American Poems* (probably Boston: Houghton, Osgood and Co. 1880). From *Independent Bible Study* by Irving L. Jensen. Copyright © 1963 by Moody Press, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Used by permission.

APPENDIX A

Essential Tools for Bible Study

1. **Good Bible Translation**

* NASB, NIV, ESV, NKJV

2. **Exhaustive Concordance**

* Compatible to your Study Bible (eg. *NIV Exhaustive Concordance*)

3. **Bible Dictionary**

* *New Ungers Bible Dictionary* (or others)

4. **Bible Encyclopedia** (need one set)

* *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (2 volumes)

* *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (6 volumes)

5. **Bible Atlas**

* *NIV Atlas of the Bible*

* bibleplaces.com

* preservingbibletimes.org

6. **Bible Handbook**

* *Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook*

7. **Historical, Geographical, Cultural Toolbox**

* Refer to page 80 for a listing

8. **Commentaries**

* *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (2 volumes)

* *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (1 volume)

* soniclight.com (search for Tom Constable free, downloadable notes)

* Individual commentaries on each book of the Bible
(seek help from the trusted Bible student)

APPENDIX B
365 Key Chapters

JANUARY

- 1.....Genesis 1
- 2.....Genesis 3
- 3.....Genesis 4
- 4.....Genesis 6
- 5.....Genesis 7
- 6.....Genesis 8
- 7.....Genesis 9
- 8.....Genesis 11
- 9.....Genesis 12
- 10.....Genesis 15
- 11.....Genesis 18
- 12.....Genesis 21
- 13.....Genesis 22
- 14.....Genesis 24
- 15.....Genesis 27
- 16.....Genesis 28
- 17.....Genesis 37
- 18.....Genesis 39
- 19.....Genesis 40
- 20.....Genesis 41
- 21.....Genesis 42
- 22.....Genesis 43
- 23.....Genesis 44
- 24.....Genesis 45
- 25.....Genesis 50
- 26.....Exodus 1
- 27.....Exodus 2
- 28.....Exodus 3
- 29.....Exodus 4
- 30.....Exodus 5
- 31.....Exodus 6

FEBRUARY

- 1.....Exodus 7
- 2.....Exodus 8
- 3.....Exodus 9
- 4.....Exodus 10
- 5.....Exodus 11
- 6.....Exodus 12
- 7.....Exodus 13
- 8.....Exodus 14
- 9.....Exodus 19

- 10.....Exodus 20
- 11.....Exodus 32
- 12.....Leviticus 16
- 13.....Numbers 13
- 14.....Numbers 14
- 15.....Deuteronomy 1
- 16.....Deuteronomy 2
- 17.....Deuteronomy 3
- 18.....Deuteronomy 4
- 19.....Deuteronomy 5
- 20.....Deuteronomy 6
- 21.....Deuteronomy 7
- 22.....Deuteronomy 8
- 23.....Deuteronomy 27
- 24.....Deuteronomy 28
- 25.....Deuteronomy 29
- 26.....Deuteronomy 30
- 27.....Deuteronomy 32
- 28.....Deuteronomy 34

MARCH

- 1.....Joshua 1
- 2.....Joshua 2
- 3.....Joshua 3
- 4.....Joshua 4
- 5.....Joshua 6
- 6.....Joshua 23
- 7.....Joshua 24
- 8.....Judges 2
- 9.....Judges 6
- 10.....Judges 7
- 11.....Judges 14
- 12.....Judges 15
- 13.....Judges 16
- 14.....Ruth 1
- 15.....Ruth 2
- 16.....Ruth 3
- 17.....Ruth 4
- 18.....I Samuel 1
- 19.....I Samuel 2
- 20.....I Samuel 3
- 21.....I Samuel 8
- 22.....I Samuel 9

- 23.....I Samuel 10
- 23.....I Samuel 15
- 25.....I Samuel 16
- 26.....I Samuel 17
- 27.....2 Samuel 5
- 28.....2 Samuel 7
- 29.....2 Samuel 11
- 30.....2 Samuel 12
- 31.....I Kings 1

APRIL

- 1.....I Kings 2
- 2.....I Kings 3
- 3.....I Kings 8
- 4.....I Kings 9
- 5.....I Kings 10
- 6.....I Kings 11
- 7.....I Kings 12
- 8.....I Kings 17
- 9.....I Kings 18
- 10.....I Kings 19
- 11.....2 Kings 1
- 12.....2 Kings 2
- 13.....2 Kings 4
- 14.....2 Kings 5
- 15.....2 Kings 6
- 16.....2 Kings 7
- 17.....2 Kings 8
- 18.....2 Kings 18
- 19.....2 Kings 19
- 20.....2 Kings 20
- 21.....2 Kings 25
- 22.....I Chronicles 17
- 23.....I Chronicles 29
- 24.....I I Chronicles 34
- 25.....I I Chronicles 35
- 26.....Ezra 1
- 27.....Ezra 3
- 28.....Ezra 4
- 29.....Ezra 5
- 30.....Ezra 6

APPENDIX B

365 Key Chapters

MAY

- 1..... Nehemiah 1
- 2..... Nehemiah 2
- 3..... Nehemiah 4
- 4..... Nehemiah 5
- 5..... Nehemiah 6
- 6..... Nehemiah 8
- 7..... Nehemiah 9
- 8..... Esther 1
- 9..... Esther 2
- 10..... Esther 3
- 11..... Esther 4
- 12..... Esther 5
- 13..... Esther 6
- 14..... Esther 7
- 15..... Esther 8
- 16..... Esther 9
- 17..... Job 1
- 18..... Job 2
- 19..... Job 38
- 20..... Job 39
- 21..... Job 40
- 22..... Job 41
- 23..... Job 42
- 24..... Psalm 1
- 25..... Psalm 19
- 26..... Psalm 23
- 27..... Psalm 37
- 28..... Psalm 90
- 29..... Psalm 100
- 30..... Psalm 103
- 31..... Psalm 104

JUNE

- 1..... Psalm 105
- 2..... Psalm 106
- 3..... Psalm 107
- 4..... Psalm 145
- 5..... Proverbs 1
- 6..... Proverbs 2
- 7..... Proverbs 3
- 8..... Proverbs 4
- 9..... Proverbs 5
- 10..... Proverbs 6

- 11..... Proverbs 7
- 12..... Proverbs 8
- 13..... Proverbs 9
- 14..... Proverbs 31
- 15..... Ecclesiastes 3
- 16..... Ecclesiastes 12
- 17..... Song of Solomon
- 18..... Isaiah 6
- 19..... Isaiah 40
- 20..... Isaiah 53
- 21..... Isaiah 55
- 22..... Isaiah 61
- 23..... Jeremiah 18
- 24..... Jeremiah 19
- 25..... Jeremiah 31
- 26..... Lamentations 3
- 27..... Ezekiel 1
- 28..... Ezekiel 37
- 29..... Daniel 1
- 30..... Daniel 2

JULY

- 1..... Daniel 3
- 2..... Daniel 4
- 3..... Daniel 5
- 4..... Daniel 6
- 5..... Daniel 9
- 6..... Hosea 4
- 7..... Hosea 14
- 8..... Joel 2
- 9..... Amos 1
- 10..... Amos 2
- 11..... Amos 9
- 12..... Obadiah
- 13..... Jonah 1
- 14..... Jonah 2
- 15..... Jonah 3
- 16..... Jonah 4
- 17..... Micah 5
- 18..... Micah 7
- 19..... Nahum 1
- 20..... Habakkuk 3
- 21..... Zephaniah 3
- 22..... Haggai 1

- 23..... Haggai 2
- 24..... Zechariah 14
- 25..... Malachi 3
- 26..... Malachi 4
- 27..... Matthew 5
- 28..... Matthew 6
- 29..... Matthew 7
- 30..... Matthew 13
- 31..... Matthew 17

AUGUST

- 1..... Matthew 21
- 2..... Matthew 24
- 3..... Matthew 25
- 4..... Matthew 26
- 5..... Matthew 27
- 6..... Matthew 28
- 7..... Mark 6
- 8..... Mark 8
- 9..... Luke 1
- 10..... Luke 2
- 11..... Luke 4
- 12..... Luke 7
- 13..... Luke 15
- 14..... Luke 16
- 15..... Luke 18
- 16..... Luke 19
- 17..... Luke 20
- 18..... Luke 24
- 19..... John 1
- 20..... John 3
- 21..... John 4
- 22..... John 6
- 23..... John 8
- 24..... John 10
- 25..... John 13
- 26..... John 14
- 27..... John 15
- 28..... John 16
- 29..... John 17
- 30..... John 20
- 31..... John 21

APPENDIX B
365 Key Chapters

SEPTEMBER

- 1..... Acts 1
- 2..... Acts 2
- 3..... Acts 7
- 4..... Acts 8
- 5..... Acts 9
- 6..... Acts 10
- 7..... Acts 13
- 8..... Acts 15
- 9..... Acts 16
- 10..... Acts 17
- 11..... Acts 18
- 12..... Acts 21
- 13..... Acts 22
- 14..... Acts 23
- 15..... Acts 24
- 16..... Acts 25
- 17..... Acts 26
- 18..... Acts 27
- 19..... Acts 28
- 20..... Romans 1
- 21..... Romans 2
- 22..... Romans 3
- 23..... Romans 4
- 24..... Romans 5
- 25..... Romans 6
- 26..... Romans 7
- 27..... Romans 8
- 28..... Romans 12
- 29..... Romans 13
- 30..... Romans 14

OCTOBER

- 1..... Romans 15
- 2..... I Corinthians 1
- 3..... I Corinthians 2
- 4..... I Corinthians 3
- 5..... I Corinthians 6
- 6..... I Corinthians 7
- 7..... I Corinthians 8
- 8..... I Corinthians 9
- 9..... I Corinthians 13
- 10..... I Corinthians 15
- 11..... 2 Corinthians 1

- 12..... 2 Corinthians 4
- 13..... 2 Corinthians 5
- 14..... 2 Corinthians 8
- 15..... 2 Corinthians 9
- 16..... 2 Corinthians 12
- 17..... Galatians 5
- 18..... Galatians 6
- 19..... Ephesians 1
- 20..... Ephesians 2
- 21..... Ephesians 3
- 22..... Ephesians 4
- 23..... Ephesians 5
- 24..... Ephesians 6
- 25..... Philippians 1
- 26..... Philippians 2
- 27..... Philippians 3
- 28..... Philippians 4
- 29..... Colossians 1
- 30..... Colossians 2
- 31..... Colossians 3

NOVEMBER

- 1..... Colossians 4
- 2..... I Thessalonians 1
- 3..... I Thessalonians 2
- 4..... I Thessalonians 3
- 5..... I Thessalonians 4
- 6..... I Thessalonians 5
- 7..... 2 Thessalonians 1
- 8..... 2 Thessalonians 2
- 9..... 2 Thessalonians 3
- 10..... I Timothy 1
- 11..... I Timothy 2
- 12..... I Timothy 3
- 13..... I Timothy 4
- 14..... I Timothy 5
- 15..... I Timothy 6
- 16..... 2 Timothy 1
- 17..... 2 Timothy 2
- 18..... 2 Timothy 3
- 19..... 2 Timothy 4
- 20..... Titus 1
- 21..... Titus 2
- 22..... Titus 3

- 23..... Philemon
- 24..... Hebrews 1
- 25..... Hebrews 2
- 26..... Hebrews 4
- 27..... Hebrews 8
- 28..... Hebrews 9
- 29..... Hebrews 11
- 30..... Hebrews 12

DECEMBER

- 1..... Hebrews 13
- 2..... James 1
- 3..... James 2
- 4..... James 3
- 5..... James 4
- 6..... James 5
- 7..... I Peter 1
- 8..... I Peter 2
- 9..... I Peter 3
- 10..... I Peter 4
- 11..... I Peter 5
- 12..... 2 Peter 1
- 13..... 2 Peter 2
- 14..... 2 Peter 3
- 15..... I John 1
- 16..... I John 2
- 17..... I John 3
- 18..... I John 4
- 19..... I John 5
- 20..... 2 John
- 21..... 3 John
- 22..... Jude
- 23..... Revelation 1
- 24..... Revelation 2
- 25..... Revelation 3
- 26..... Revelation 4
- 27..... Revelation 5
- 28..... Revelation 19
- 29..... Revelation 20
- 30..... Revelation 21
- 31..... Revelation 22

25 Key Events in the Life of Christ

1. The Virgin Birth of Christ
Luke 2:8-38
2. The Ministry of John the Baptist
Matthew 3:1-12
Mark 1:1-8
Luke 3:1-18
3. The Baptism of Jesus
Matthew 3:13-17
Mark 1:9-11
Luke 3:21-2
4. The Temptation of Jesus
Matthew 4:1-11
Mark 1:12-13
Luke 4:1-13
5. The Cleansing of the Temple (1st time)
John 2:13-25
6. The Rejection at Nazareth
Luke 4:16-30
7. Healing the Leper
Matthew 8:1-4
Mark 1:40-45
Luke 5:12-16
8. Healing the Paralytic Man
Matthew 9:2-8
Mark 2:1-12
Luke 5:17-26
9. Healing a Withered Hand
Matthew 12:9-14
Mark 3:1-6
Luke 6:6-11
10. Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5:1 - 8:1
Luke 6:20-49
11. The Blasphemy of the Pharisees
Matthew 12:22-37
Mark 3:22-30
Luke 11:14-26
12. The Parables of Jesus
Matthew 13:1-53
Mark 4:1-34
Luke 8:4-18
13. The Feeding of the 5000
Matthew 14:13-21
Mark 6:30-44
Luke 9:10-17
John 6:1-14

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|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| 14. | The Confession of Peter | Matthew 16:13-20
Mark 8:27-30
Luke 9:18-21 |
| 15. | The Transfiguration | Matthew 17:1-13
Mark 9:2-13
Luke 9:28-36 |
| 16. | The Raising of Lazarus | John 11:17- 46 |
| 17. | The Triumphal Entry | Matthew 21:1-11
Mark 11:1-11
Luke 19:29-44
John 12:12-19 |
| 18. | The Final Teaching in the Temple | Matthew 21:23-46
Mark 11:27–12:44
Luke 20:1-19 |
| 19. | The Olivet Discourse | Matthew 24:1–25:46
Mark 13:1-37
Luke 21:5-36 |
| 20. | The Upper Room Discourse | John 13:1–17:26 |
| 21. | The Trial Before Caiaphas | Matthew 26:59-68
Mark 14:55-65
Luke 22:63-71
John 18:19-24 |
| 22. | The Mockery of Jesus | Matthew 27:27-30
Mark 15:16-19 |
| 23. | The Crucifixion of Jesus | Matthew 27:27-66
Mark 15:33-41
Luke 23:26-49
John 19:17-37 |
| 24. | The Resurrection of Jesus | Matthew 28:1-10
Mark 16:1-8
Luke 24:1-12
John 20:1-10 |
| 25. | The Ascension of Jesus | Mark 16:19-20
Luke 24:50-53
Acts 1:6-11 |